

Approved 10/19/2004

At 7:00 pm Charles Kimball called the meeting to order in the first floor meeting room at the Town Hall. Present were Budget Committee members Charles Kimball, Mike Miller, Audrey Karamourtopoulos, Joe Delahunty, Peg Pinkham, Marc Wood, and Donald Gates Jr. Also present were Heidi Carlson and Andy Kohlhofer.

Kimball asked about the status of Marilyn Baker. Carlson indicated to the Committee that a letter of resignation had been received from Mrs Baker last Thursday. Selectmen accepted this resignation at their meeting on Thursday night October 7th.

Motion was made by Charles Kimball and seconded by Joe Delahunty to appoint Andy Kohlhofer as a member of the Budget Committee to fill the seat vacated by the recent resignation of Marilyn Baker. Pinkham asked if the position had been, or should be, advertised. Kimball answered that it was not required, and that Mr Kohlhofer had expressed interest in a position on the Committee. The vote to appoint Kohlhofer was approved by the majority. This will be a one year term, to go through the next election.

Fire Chief Richard Heselton was present to discuss the Fire Department budget submission. Copies of the first draft of the Fire Department budget were distributed to the Committee members.

Heselton began by saying the Fire Department budget is a difficult thing, as you never know about a major breakdown or a busy forest fire season. He said he runs the fire Department budget like his own finances, and tries to save some through the year to cover an emergency or an unforeseen need.

Heselton said that this is a rough draft of the budget put forth to the Committee, including some requests made by the Officers and some by the Fire Chief.

Heselton began by discussing a warrant article for a new pickup truck for \$24,000 (not yet described in full in the budget detail, nor is the budget figure carried in the first draft proposal). He discussed having used his own vehicle for Fire Department business for many years, and doesn't want to put a bunch of junk in it (dirty hose, material from auto accidents, etc). He feels it is time to have such a vehicle, to haul the trailer, personnel to scenes and training, etc.

Chief Heselton read through some of his old notes, indicating his reasoning for wanting the pickup truck. He said he has a State bid quote on a vehicle he wants for \$23,550. He read through the specification he had received from Irwin Motors for the truck. The cost of the same vehicle to an individual is \$33,340.

He said he would want people to be able to take the vehicle to school, and have it to tow the trailer on a consistent, reliable basis.

Heselton then discussed the possibility of a loft in the fire station to house the hand tub. He said he has discussed this with the Selectmen; as well as possibly adding a bay to the Historical Museum. He also mentioned the possibility of selling the hand tub to a private individual.

He discussed some space needs with the rescue trailer and the Fire Department's covered haz mat trailer.

He said that no one wants to pull a preconnected line from the truck because it is difficult and time consuming to clean and repack. He said staging is necessary for repacking the hose due to the location of preconnects on the new truck, and discussed some of the "debate" about this particular issue when the new truck was purchased. He discussed this in reference to an item proposed in the 2005 budget to install a trash line in the new truck. He said he may be able to get this work done in 2004. The new estimate for this work is \$3,250; versus the initial estimate in the budget of \$5,000.

He then discussed the quick dump on Tank 4. He said that when the truck was built in 1989, that quick dumps were not used like they are now. Currently the Fire Department has to pump water off the truck, versus a quick dump, which would void the tank in one to two minutes versus about five to pump it off. He said this is due to changing technology in the fire service.

The revised estimate is \$4,250 for the quick dump versus the \$6,000 initial estimate carried in the budget. This estimate is from Valley Fire Equipment in Bradford NH.

He discussed dry hydrants and cisterns in regard to their maintenance. He said he thought there needed to be some allowance for this, but did not know what it would cost. A couple of years ago they were painted and marked as a Boy Scout project by a Fremont resident. He said that \$1,500 might be a figure to use. No number is carried in the Fire Department budget proposal as currently written.

There was a lengthy discussion about the impact fees charged by the Town for the School District. There was some discussion about the way the impact fees were established and how that might be able to help fund some town expenses as well. Heselton said that there are some 397 bedrooms approved to be built in Fremont. He touched on new developments at Black Rocks Village, Spruce Hill, and some land owned by Nathaniel Brown along the Exeter River. Miller suggested that there must be some guidelines available to assist fire departments in knowing what they need for equipment for certain populations or classes of homes. Heselton discussed ISO ratings and the information they provide, but it does not really help the small departments.

Heselton said he checks the hydrants and pumps himself, so he was not worried about the maintenance issue. Miller suggested that Heselton check into having some of this maintenance done by an outside testing or maintenance company.

Heselton said he was creating a lot of correspondence of late, due to plan reviews and the increasing workload. He has changed his initial request to \$3,500 for the clerical line.

He said to remove the tool crib from the budget as well.

He briefly discussed having an "emergency fund" and would like to revisit that at the end of the budget process to see if some funding should be set aside.

Heselton discussed the matching grant received from FEMA for the diesel exhaust system. This is a diesel exhaust system for the Safety Complex, a newer standard, which will likely someday be OSHA required as diesel exhaust is reported as a carcinogen. Heselton said that in Fremont all the doors get opened when there is a call, and there is little or no buildup of diesel exhaust. He said that someday it will be mandatory and the as Town has the grant, we should do it now.

Heselton discussed the hose change-out racks at the fire station, which are used when they come in with wet hose and need to repack the truck with dry hose. He said the newer hose is much lighter and easier to handle than the old hose.

He discussed the Knox Box system and how it works.

He discussed the fact that the Selectmen wanted him to have office hours, which was a "sore point" for him. Gates explained the Selectmen's thought process on this, in response to a question from Miller. Heselton discussed his general schedule, and Carlson and Gates added that the attempt at having six office hours per week was to help ease the Chief's constant calls at home, station, or via messages from the office and dispatch.

Chief Heselton read through a letter that he had received from the Selectmen last year regarding the agreement about holding office hours. Heselton then read through one of his log responses to the Selectmen's letter. He said that he handles requests when they come in, and still feels this is the best approach. Carlson explained that one of the rationale points behind it was to cut down on Heselton having to be available so much at home and by pager or cell phone. Heselton is happy with the way it is now, handling everything as it arises.

Peg Pinkham asked if Heselton was discussing these matters with regard to his salary line as a budgetary matter, and he said he was. He said that Betty Stanley was not going to seek reappointment as the Deputy Town Clerk, and that he too, was looking toward a retirement. (Betty is the current Fire Department Secretary as well). He feels there should be money enough in the budget to replace him and the many hours he puts in now. He thinks it should be at a funding level of \$9,000 for the Chief's compensation.

Heselton discussed his log sheet for today, which included some town business and several other items.

Gates went back to the truck discussion again, indicating that the Chief has been talking about a lot of dirty material, hose, gas tanks, etc, and indicated that is why he suggested a used vehicle that could be used for such tasks (like the ACO truck). He said within a year or two he could then get rid of Engine 2.

In response to questions, Heselton said it won't cost anything to fit the truck up. He said the only thing that came to mind was a forestry unit to put in it in the summer time. Heselton said the lights have been purchased already, they have a radio designated by the FEMA grant, and it wouldn't need anything else. He said the life span on a new truck would be 10 years because it won't get a lot of use.

Delahunty asked a question about the trailer this truck will tow, and Heselton described the covered trailer as an 18 foot tandem axel enclosed trailer with all the dive equipment in it, a desk, can be used as a command post, a rehab center, has a radio and lights in it. It also carries the hazardous material cleanup equipment and supplies.

In response to a question from Gates, Heselton said it would not likely be an item available on a future FEMA grant because they don't do a lot of vehicles within these grant processes.

Miller asked where the truck would be stored, and Heselton said if Engine 2 goes, there will be any empty bay to house it, which could be done within a year. He had also asked about what line items could be deleted if a new truck was purchased, and the only two were Chief's gas compensation and mileage (a total of \$850). He said that Engine 2 would be sold by sealed bid. He said it has 9000 original miles and no rust. He thought it might bring \$6,000 to \$7,000 sold by sealed bid. It was pointed out that money would be returned to the general fund.

At 8:35 pm Chief Heselton left the meeting. There was a five minute recess.

At 8:40 pm Parks & Recreation Commission members Renee King, Jon Benson, Jeff Rowell, and Joy Wood met with the Committee. Copies were distributed of the second draft of the Parks & Recreation Commission budget.

Renee King walked through this second draft of the budget. Carlson explained that the Selectmen had not yet seen this revision, done this evening by the Commission at their meeting. It was pointed out that the Selectmen made their recommendations based on the initial submission by the Commission, not on this submission.

King said there were 30 to 35 children participating this year in the summer program. The biggest problem with the program this summer was that no location existed until June (as the school was under construction). They indicated that enrollment the prior year 2003 was 31; and that prior years were about the same. They are unsure where the program would be held next year. The pros and cons of using the fields were discussed, as well as those of using space at Ellis School.

Salaries are down because it is a six week program proposed for 2005 as compared to an eight week program in 2004. King explained that there are two volunteers every year for the program, who if they work out, are asked back to the lower level tiered paid positions the following year. She said that the Director makes some decisions about who is asked back, so that there is some continuity and experience with the program. The Director would be coming back for her fourth year, and has most expenses put down to the minimum necessary.

There was some discussion about whether \$2,000 was sufficient funding for the summer activities line. There was some comparison to previous years and this line item having been overspent. Carlson explained that sometimes once enrollment is determined that there are days or weeks when there are less counselors working due to enrollment and the child/counselor ratio. The overage here has sometimes been covered by the reduced need for staffing, once the program gets underway.

Field trips are proposed at \$2,500 as they are doing more local field trips. They now do two field trips per week (Tuesday and Thursday) but are doing more trips closer to home.

Bus rental is up due to the increase in cost of gas, but there are four less trips than were done in 2004.

Administration is up \$50 to purchase an enhanced park pass that will allow more trips within the NH State Parks system.

Jon Benson explained the netting to be installed for safety reasons at the soccer field, and adjacent to the playground area.

There was general discussion about the items in the ballfield maintenance items. King said they are trying to get a sign similar to the one at the Library, with a space to put information underneath it, much like that at the library.

The Commission has decided to put the sign up higher on the Town's property, to avoid the sign being on State property adjacent to the road. With this moved further back, the sign can be only one sided, which will cost less money.

There was discussion about the field maintenance, and what the costs are for electricity and what the offset is in concession stand and field rental charges.

Benson explained that they felt they had to prioritize, given budget constraints, and that they eliminated the basketball court, choosing the netting as a safety issue instead. The basketball poles and hoops were approximately \$1,400. Benson said he did not have a firm quote, and Delahunty offered that the hottop cost could be as high as \$1.35 per square foot (50 x 100 is the size of the court that Benson is calculating). Benson said the \$5,000 was not a hard number.

King addressed a new item in the budget (not in the initial pass sent to the Selectmen) to increase the Playground Capital Reserve fund to \$7,500 for 2005. There was a lengthy discussion about the Playground Capital Reserve Fund and the Playground Special Revenue Fund. There was discussion about the location of capital reserve items within the budget. They are listed all together under a Capital Reserve header. To gain an understanding of the full cost of parks and recreation, one would want to consider this capital reserve amount.

There was discussion about the tax rate. Delahunty asked questions about the additional costs to next years tax rate. Pinkham said that Fremont did not have any capital costs toward the new high school. There was general discussion about the tuition costs and what the Town of Fremont owes the Sanborn District. There was some debate about what the costs are that the School District has incurred at this point. The tax rate has been received and is a total of \$31.56 for the 2004 tax year. Members asked Pinkham for more information about the impacts in future years of votes taken at the 2004 annual meetings.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Charles Kimball signed the appointment form for Andrew P Kohlhofer for a replacement of Marilyn Baker's resignation. This was forwarded to the Town Clerk. Kohlhofer was advised he should see the Clerk to be sworn in sometime this week, and that she had evening hours on Thursday.
2. Joe Delahunty moved to approve the minutes from 04 May 2004. Mike Miller seconded and the vote was approved.
3. Joe Delahunty moved to approve the minutes from 28 September 2004. Mike Miller seconded and the vote was approved, with Peg Pinkham abstaining.
4. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19 October 2004 at 7:00 pm. Copies of the schedule were distributed as several members had not received the mailer that went out on Friday.

With no further business, motion was made by Miller and seconded by Karamourtopoulos to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm. The vote was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator